



DYNAMISM AND CHANGING ECONOMIC PATTERN AMONG THE ST PEOPLE

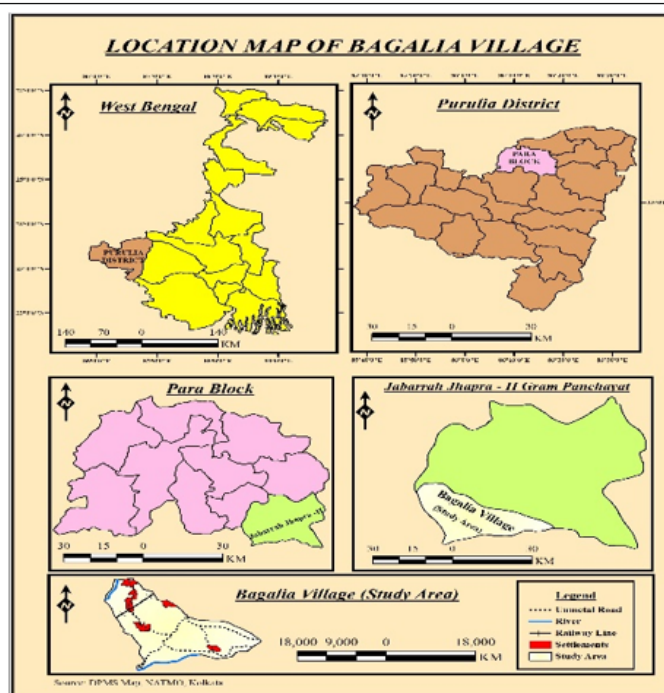
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ABSTRACT

Tribe also known as Indigenous people, a human social group comprising numerous families, clans, or generations together with slaves and defined by traditions of common descent, language, culture and ideology. In some cases, tribes have legal recognition and some degree of political autonomy from federal government. In this research paper, it is mentioned that the indigenous people are mainly Santhals. They are from Munda ethnic group native to India, are also found in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forest to hills and inaccessible areas. They are at different stages of social, economic and educational development. Various projects are being implemented by the government for ST people but in remote village (surveyed village for this study) the uneven implementation of these project, there has been no significant change in economic status of ST people specially in the surveyed area. In some cases, ST villagers are abandoning their traditional livelihood to work as labourers to improve their economic status. The rate of economic development and the level of per-capita income increase and more workforce shift from primary sector to secondary and tertiary sector. That's why for secure income as well as to learn new skills labour switch to different activity. It is known as occupational mobility, which usually measured by changes in classification of occupational categories. As an example of such a situation, ST people of Bagalia village, Purulia district has been selected and this micro level survey, shows a picture of ST people of this surveyed village, moving from their traditional livelihood to another livelihood.

KEY WORDS: Education, Occupation, Occupational-mobility, Scheduled Tribe.



For this micro level study Bagalia village has been selected on the basis of a) concentration of scheduled tribe population and b) those families who have three age groups of family members, below 30 years, 30 to 60 years and more than 60 years. Total sample size is 247. This village is situated under Jabarra-Jhapra II Gram panchayet at Para block of Purulia district in west Bengal, India. Geographical location is 26° 60' N to 23° 50' N and 85° 75' E to 86° 65' E.

INTRODUCTION:

Occupation refers a regular activity which are engaged or performed for payment. Occupational mobility can be defined as the capability of the labour which enable it to switch to different occupation. Generally, the labour switch to the new job in order to gain good income. Occupational mobility has been considered significant for that societies where occupations are fixed and set at birth, and are transmitted from old generation to young generation through rigid schemes have little room for innovation and fulfillment at either the individual or collective level. But now occupational mobility is a new term for tribal society at the cause of profitable income and seemed source of income. In this context the main objective of this study is to find the reasons behind the occupational shifting among the ST community of study villages.

METHOD OF THE STUDY:

This micro-level study is based on intensive field work. Study village has selected on the basis of the concentration of Scheduled tribe population with three generations. Selection of population and respondent were made through purposive sampling method. Three generation represents the age group namely below 30 years, 30 years to 60 years and above 60 years. Total sample size is 247. In between total surveyed population male is 111 and female is 136. According to census 2011, the total ST population of Bagalia village is 254. Data was collected from two sources. Primary and Secondary. Primary data was collected through structure scheduled and questionnaire. Different published and unpublished record are secondary sources of data considered for the study which were collected from the block development office, block land and land revenue office, panchayat office, non-governmental organizations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

From this study it has been notified that in this ST community below 30 years age group is more educated. They have maximum up to higher secondary level of education. 4.55% male and 4.34% female have taken college level of education. People of middle age 30 to 60 years have taken education up to secondary level and only 4.56% people are found to be higher educated. 1.13% male and 8.69% female of above 60 years age group have primary level of education. These above-mentioned percentages indicate a unique picture in old age group, female is more literate than male. So, it is concluded that young generations of this community are interested in education. In this village there are more acceptance for education as a tool for increasing income. Economy is found to be a prime mover, still the aspect of education as stepping stone for greater social mobility is also noticed in good measure. It is found that education was necessary for a larger change in life than just rise in income. Education is needed to reflect social mobility rather than merely more money. This is true more for ST community.

In rural Bengal, agriculture mainly crop cultivation is the major traditional occupation of the villagers. Same picture present in this surveyed village Bagalia. Most of the old age people are attached with crop farming. But young generation is more interested in non-agricultural occupation.

Table no 1.1 Age wise occupational structure of ST people (generation wise)

Age wise occupational structure							
ST working population in %							
Occupational category	< 30 years age		30-60 years age		>60 years age		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Agriculture	1.69		15.25		13.56		100%
Non-agriculture		1.69					
			1.69				
			5.08				
	15.25	1.69	22.88	21.19			

Source : Primary household survey, 2019

From the above-mentioned chart, it is observed that, among the ST community, the percentage of workers in non-agricultural field is increasing more rapidly than in agricultural field, which shows a clear shifting of choice of job in favour of non-agriculture.

Table no 1.2 Occupational mobility of ST population (generation wise)

Occupational category	Age group (years)			Total
	Below 30 years	30 – 60 years	Above 60 years	
Agriculture	1.69	15.25	13.56	100%
Non-agriculture	18.63	50.84	--	

Source : Primary household survey, 2019

From the above-mentioned table 1.2, it becomes clear that there is a marked incidence of people moving away from agriculture across ST villagers. It is observed that among the above 60 years age group of people of Bagalia village 13.56% are engaged in agriculture whereas no one interested in non-agriculture sector. In next generation people 15.25% is attached with agriculture and 50.84% is in non-agriculture activities. Young generation, very low percentage only 1.69% engaged in agriculture. But 18.63% in non-agriculture. So, percentage of workers in non-agricultural field is increasing more rapidly than in agricultural field, which shows a clear shifting of choice of occupation in favour of non-agriculture.

Based on survey report it shows that most of the ST people are leaving agriculture and taking up other occupations. There have some reasons behind this shifting.

1. Education: Education is the never-ending process of modification of behaviour and it is found to have evolved through the edges as development process remaining concerned with individual and social life. It leads to social change and social progress. Early childhood education can produce significant gains in children's learning and development. High quality childhood education assists many at-risk children in avoiding poor outcomes. This education is the foundation for his or her future development providing a strong base for lifelong learning and learning abilities, including cognitive and social development. In this village ST villagers are more interested about education. The young generation is encouraging their children to go to school. People are very much concern about education. They realize that education improves knowledge, skills about the world around us and changes it

into something better. It plays a vital role to improve social and financial status of a family and certainly determine the quality of an individual's life.

- 2. High expenditure:** Enough money is needed to fulfill the daily needs of the people and for this source of income is very essential. On the other hand, adequate money is needed to adapt to the changes in today's society. So rural workforce finds to get absorbed in the other income sector.
- 3. Secured source of income:** another most important reason behind this shifting is secured source of income. From agriculture the income depends on quality and quantity of production. But if people have fixed job or fixed other source for income then it will be very safe for them.
- 4. Unfertile soil and low productive land:** Area is dominated by granitic gneiss and sediments of the Chhotonagpur gneiss complex of Precambrian age. Bagalia has a thick geological succession of mostly Archaean Granites Gneiss and to a much lesser extent, quaternary semi consolidated sediments, Carboniferous sandstone shale, Pre Cambrian massive Granites and Quartzite and with recent alluvium sediments deposition. So, this type of rock formed gravelly loamy soil which has not enough fertility for crop cultivation.
- 5. Lack of rainfall and absence of well irrigation:** The region is basically drought prone. The area is characterized by low rainfall and high evaporation. Water table is far below the ground. Rainfall occurs due to local low pressure. No main river channel is seen at the study village. So well irrigation system are not found.

For these like lack of sufficient rainfall throughout the year, absence of well irrigation, unfertile soil etc are basic reasons for low production in crop cultivation. Villagers are suffering from insecure income. So young generation of ST community mentally prepare to shift their source of income. They are interested in construction job, business, service etc.

CONCLUSION:

To improve the socio-economic status of these villagers, government has brought into being many rural development programmes. During the field work it is observed that introduction of many development programmes cannot come off with a radical change in the standard of living or economic condition of rural people specially ST of surveyed village compared to present asking market price of West Bengal.

Plain relief with undulating nature, semi fertile gravelly soil and insufficient rainfall good amount of crops are not cultivated here. In winter season insufficient irrigation does not help to cultivate Rabi crops. No surplus amount of crops is there. Low quality of production is only consumed as main food (rice) of a family. Generation wise separation of cultivated land produce small amount of crops. Insufficient amount of production does not help to enrich this village economy. People have no interest to extent agriculture land or purchase the agricultural equipment. Middle age group of people is only maintaining their traditional land. Villagers are shifting in labour work, in brick field or any construction or any other works. Generation wise occupational mobility is a unique change among ST community of this village. Better economic condition, better life style, having more income happens to be the motive force for this mobilization.

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